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April 7, 2003

Ms. Jaya Zyman-Ponebshek
Project Manager, Medina County Railroad Project
URS Corporation
P.O. Box 201088
Austin, Texas 78720-1088

#E1-53
R21

Re: Request for Preliminary Comments on STB Finance Docket No. 34284,
Southwest Gulf Railroad Company Construction and Operation Exemption –
Medina County, Texas

Dear Ms. Zyman-Ponebshek:

Thank you for sending preliminary information about the proposed railroad project to transport limestone quarry aggregate to Houston and other markets. Our staff has reviewed the information provided, with a focus on any potential impacts to water resources or conflicts with the regional and state water plans.

We concur with Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's observation that the rail line would only cross two drainages with intermittent seasonal flow (Quihi and Elm Creeks). However, those drainages are important for their recharge of the Edwards aquifer, which is an important water source for meeting municipal, industrial, and agricultural water needs. Therefore, we recommend best management practices in crossing those drainages. In addition, water quality is a concern because any spills into these drainages could result in pollution to a major aquifer. Since the aggregate material is not a major pollution concern, the only thing remaining is the fuel and oil from the train operation itself. We do concur that the transport of these bulky aggregates appears to be much more feasible by train than by truck, based on the description in the preliminary synopsis. In conclusion, we find no conflicts with the regional or state water plans.

Sincerely,

William F. Mullican, III

William F. Mullican, III
Deputy Executive Administrator

Office of Planning

Our Mission

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